

Do Not Tire The People

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Source: The Manners of the Scholar & Student of Knowledge, Pgs. 18-20

From 'Ikrimah from Ibn 'Abbaas (radee Allaahu 'anhum) who said:

"Narrate to the people once every week, and if you refuse then twice and if you do it a lot then three times. And do not make the people fed up with this Qur'aan and do not come to a people when they are speaking with some of their talk such that you start to relate to them and cut off their talk and therefore bore them, but remain silent. So when they ask you then narrate to them, such that they are eager, and avoid rhymed prose when making supplication. Because I experienced that Allaah's Messenger (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and his Companions did not do this, rather they only avoided it." [1]

And al-Bayhaqee in his book, Al-Madkhal ilas-Sunan il-Kubraa, Pgs. 357-361, brings a chapter heading in this regard:

'Chapter: Suitable Times for Admonition and Knowledge - for fear of boring the people...' in it he reports a number of narrations from the Salaf-us-Saalih.

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in his book, Al-Jaami' li Akhlaaq ir-Raawee wa Aadaab is-Saami, 2/127, brings a chapter heading:

'The Hatred of Boring the Listener and of Tiring him out by quoting hadeeth for a long time and quoting very much...'

He says in that chapter, "It is befitting that the narrator of hadeeth should not make the gathering in which he is narrating very long. Rather he should make it moderate in length and of middle length to avoid making the one who is listening fed up and weary; such as will lead him to become weary and lazy about learning."

Then he reports from al-Mubarrid, that he said, "Whoever makes the speech long and speaks a great deal, then he has exposed his companions to the risk of boredom and not listening properly. That he leaves a remainder of his hadeeth to return to another time is better for him than adding something which is essential for the student to hear, at a time when he has no desire and no energy to do so."

It is reported from 'Abdullaah ibn al-Mu'tazz that he said, "From the narrators of hadeeth there are some who make it such that the people can hear and listen well and who avoid causing boredom. And they do so by making it somewhat short and they make it longer if they see that the people's eyes want extra. He is a person who knows how to join sayings and cut things off at the right place. He knows what to quote and what to indicate. This is something which adorns his manners just as his manners adorn him."

As is well known naturally a person who is listening becomes bored more quickly than the person speaking and the hearts become tired just as the bodies become tired.

Therefore it is recommended to make use of various points of wisdom to make it easy for the hearts of the people. As is reported from the famous taabi'ee, az-Zuhree,

"A man used to sit with the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (sall-Allaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and he would revise narrations with them. But when the hadeeth became too much for him and difficult for him, he would say, 'The ear becomes tired even though the heart desires it. So give me some of your poetry and give me some of your worldly talk'." [2]

Therefore when az-Zuhree was asked about the hadeeth he would say, "Cause yourselves to desire it by using worldly talk." [3]

Muhammad ibn 'Abdul-Wahhab [4] said,

"This is because the word az-Zuhree used (i.e. amhidoona) means when camels go outside and eat the nice juicy green plants and then they become sick of it, they eat that which is bitter and thorny and keep eating it until they become fed up and bored with that - then they desire the fresh one again, and so go back to the fresh one. Therefore it is said, 'amhidoonaa' means 'mix up your hadeeth with something that is not hadeeth' so that the soul becomes ready and eager."

Footnotes:

[1] Reported by al-Bukhaaree, Eng. Trans. Vol.8, P. 234, No. 349

[2] Reported by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in Al-Jaami' li-Akhlaaqir-Raawee wa Aadaabis-Saami', 2/129/130, and by al-Bayhaqee in Madkhal ilas-Sunanil-Kubraa, No. 606

[3] Ibid., 2/130 and No. 607 in al-Madkhal

[4] One of the narrators of the hadeeth of az-Zuhree